



Brewer glad for debt ceiling deal, but concerned about impact on Arizona

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By [Howard Fischer](#), Capitol Media Services

Gov. Jan Brewer said Tuesday she is glad the president and Congress finally crafted a deal on the spending cap and debt reduction.

But now she wants to know how all that might affect the state.

The governor said she appreciates the complexity of the issue.

"It's almost an impossible task what they're facing," she said. "It's been looming there for a while now." But Brewer said she believes the package ultimately is a good thing.

"I think that now we're going to see the recovery, the turnaround, about how they're doing business" in Washington, she said.

The governor, however, said she could not say whether, from her perspective, the agreement is a good deal for Republicans, like herself, who want to bring spending under control.

"I think it was probably the best deal that they could get," she said.

The next step, said Brewer, is whether the move to cut spending in Washington will end up affecting Arizona, as some obligations now being funded by the federal government will instead be pawned off to the states.

"Well, we are always concerned how it's going to affect the states, and certainly I am concerned about how it's going to affect Arizona," she said. "The devil's always in the details. So we'll do the best that we can with the dollars that come."

Gubernatorial press aide Matthew Benson said part of the problem is that the deal to cut \$2.1 trillion over the next decade is sort of vague.

While \$800 billion of that is up front, the real work is being left to a special "super committee" of six Democrats and six Republicans who have to come up with another \$1.2 trillion. Committee members are likely to look at formula programs like Medicaid for places to trim.

And what makes the situation even more uncertain is that if the committee fails, or if Congress does not approve the panel's plan, then the legislation calls for automatic across-the-board cuts.

Benson said that Brewer believes that the federal government has a "spending problem" it needs to address. Still, he said, the governor recognizes some of these future cuts will impact Arizona and its communities.

"We hope that the federal government will, as much as possible, not balance its budget on the backs of state and local government," he said.

State Treasurer Doug Ducey said that, at this point, he does not believe there will be any impact, at least not immediately.

"Our office has reviewed the bill and it does not cut a single program," he said. Instead, Ducey said, it places caps on certain spending "with promises of cuts that maybe in the future another Congress can overturn."

Ducey said state agencies heavily dependent on federal funds would do well to look at their spending in anticipation of losing some of that cash down the road.

The treasurer, like several of the congressional Republicans who voted against the plan, derided a description of it as spending cuts.

"Somehow in government, if you spent \$10 last year and were planning to spend \$12 next year but ended up spending only \$11, that constitutes a spending cut," he said. Ducey called what was approved "the exact opposite of responsible financial management."